

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

1. (Original) A method of filtering the flow of blood between an atrium and a left atrial appendage of a patient comprising:

providing a filtering membrane having a permeable structure which allows blood to flow through the filtering membrane but substantially inhibits thrombus from passing therethrough, and a support structure attached to the filtering membrane configured to permanently engage a portion of an ostium and an interior wall of the left atrial appendage;

positioning the filtering membrane across the ostium by permanently engaging the portion of the interior wall of the left atrial appendage with the support structure; and

filtering blood flow through the ostium with the filtering membrane such that blood may flow through the filtering membrane while thrombus is substantially inhibited from passing therethrough.

2. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the support structure comprises a centering structure extending from the filtering membrane, and

wherein the positioning the filtering membrane comprises centering the filtering membrane over the ostium by passing the centering structure into the ostium.

3. (Original) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the support structure comprises an anchor structure and a tether extending between the anchor structure and the filtering membrane, and

wherein positioning the filtering membrane further comprises piercing the wall of the left atrial appendage with the anchor structure.

4. (Original) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the support structure comprises an expandable structure, and

wherein the positioning the filtering membrane further comprises expanding the expandable structure to engage an interior wall of the left atrial appendage.

5. (Original) The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the support structure comprises a substantially cylindrical configuration, and
wherein the positioning the filtering membrane further comprises expanding the support structure to engage the interior wall of the left atrial appendage.
6. (Original) The method as defined in claim 5, further comprising:
providing an expandable structure which is positioned within the support structure and which radially expands the support structure, and
wherein the positioning the filtering membrane further comprises expanding the expandable structure, thereby expanding the support structure.
7. (Original) The method as defined in claim 6, wherein the filtering membrane defines an opening therethrough, the method further comprising:
after expanding the support structure to engage the interior wall of the left atrial appendage, removing the expandable structure through the opening in the filtering membrane.